

Newsletter 282 April 2019

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 282 April 2019

As March came to an end it farewelled us with some good rain. The March gathering involved a visit to the Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve where we tackled the olives that have emerged or re-sprouted since our last visit. Approximately 200 plants were removed or sprayed which shows that we need to be vigilant and keep up our efforts so that eventually all of the bank of seeds and plants gets exhausted.

We had a visit from Helen Newman who is a local artist preparing an entry for the Chiltern Art Prize that will be held in June. Helen is going to prepare a work that features images projected onto bark and other textured surfaces that can be found within the Park.

Mick inspected the 14 mammal nest boxes in the reserve: 2 had gliders in residence, 2 had Tuans (Brush Tailed Phascogales) and most of the rest had evidence of Tuans â?? not as good as last yearâ??s survey but better than 2017.

Philippa inspecting a mammal nest box Honeycomb left by European bees

[Philippa Inspecting Nest Box for mammals](#)

Boxes containing bees are left open to encourage the bees to move on after which birds and gliders clean up the honey and honeycomb that is left. The results of this are shown above on the right.



Inspection of about 20 mammal boxes in the Southern section of the Park has found that all were empty with few signs of recent activity. We hope that some good rains will turn this situation around.

Animalia brochure Friends (through the efforts of Eileen and Neil) are putting together a brochure on the mammals, reptiles, frogs and insects (invertebrates). This brochure will complement our bird and flora brochures that are greatly appreciated by visitors to the Park. We are looking for any good images that members may have so please email Neville (neville@nrbartlett.com.au) if you have any that you would like considered for the brochure.

President's Report

Karen Retra has agreed to give a talk on Native Bees, Wasps and Flies at AGM on Saturday 7th September. Some of us attended a recent talk by Karen who is very effective at sharing her passion and enthusiasm about native bees in particular. We look forward to hearing more on this interesting subject. Another 4,000 bird brochures have been received as a top up of our supply of this popular brochure that we are now putting in some of the information boxes within the Park. This enables visitors access to them at the most relevant locations.

Eileen's health is such that she is moving from Chiltern to assisted care in Yackandandah. She is standing down from Friends' activities while she goes through the change. The production of 282 consecutive newsletters, in addition to all of her other work for Friends, is an amazing achievement. Neville will be taking on this role for the time being so please send any interesting material his way.

Around the Park

Good news from Grasslands. Mick and Tony checked the nest boxes and the rain gauge. Thirteen mm of rain and three of the five nest boxes occupied by Sugar Gliders, so a good result. Noisy Grey-crowned Babblers were in their usual haunt at the northern end of the block.





The plantings are now over the stressful period and should start to show good growth. The plantings are now over the stressful period and should start to show good growth. Following the rain we will need to keep an eye on the Vinca patch at Bartley's. Presently it is bare, so any emerging seedlings can be easily spotted and removed.

Weeds

Heliotrope is a weed of bare ground. We have it at Bartley's Block where Jan is waging war on it and the emerging Patterson's Curse. Heliotrope has also been recorded on bare ground in the Mt Pilot section. After rain and while the soil is warm it flourishes. It contains toxins which damage the liver of livestock. It is native to central Europe and N Africa. In the 19th century it was introduced into South Australia and is now widespread.





Drones, pests and weeds

Skylab, a drone software company in Hamburg, has developed multispectral cameras which are mounted on large drones. They are being used to scan Spruce forests for

Bark Beetle. The leaves of the affected trees are unable to produce chlorophyll. The cameras are programmed to pick up the affected trees and create a map so that the infestations can be dealt with. In Denmark drone mounted cameras are spotting and marking weeds for precision herbicide treatment while some with machine learning and spectral imaging equipment are helping to identify farmland that need more watering or specialised treatment. Source : New Scientist 2018

Ranger's Report

Nearly all Parks staff have spent the past month on fires throughout the state. Locally we have had three fires in the park - a small one on Old Coach Road and two others that burnt about a hectare near Eldorado. All were started by lightning. Storms have also resulted in many trees blocking roads in the park. The park is showing significant signs of drought stress now with sparse understory and dying off of eucalypts. We are still encouraging Friends to register on Park Connect to assist in planning and recording of group activities.

Rainfall For March

50.7 mm over 5 days. Last year's total was 71.6mm

NEXT MEETING - SATURDAY MAY 4TH 2019

We will advise of the activity closer to the day. Meet at the Post Office at 9.00am Field contact: Neville on 0412 399 239

Category

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